

Sub H17 1. (PREVIOUSLY AMENDED) A method of preparing, transporting and dispensing food between a series of remote locations, the method comprising the steps of:

- Q**
- preparing the food for consumption at a first location;
 - apportioning the food onto a plurality of trays at the first location;
 - stacking the trays in a manually maneuverable rack, and providing the rack with a predetermined stacking arrangement of particular dimensions;
 - loading the maneuverable rack onto a refrigerated vehicle for transportation to a second remote location;
 - transferring the maneuverable rack, at the second location, into a moveable receptacle comprising at least one of heating and cooling means, and the receptacle being configured to receive at least one of the plurality of racks;
 - relocating the moveable receptacle to a desired position;
 - activating at least one of the heating and cooling means prior to dispensing of the food trays to consumers;
 - dispensing the food trays to the consumers for consumption;
 - collecting and re-stacking the trays in the rack situated within the receptacle;
 - removing the at least one maneuverable rack from the moveable receptacle; and
 - loading the at least one maneuverable rack back onto the transfer vehicle for transportation of the rack from the second location back to the first location.

Sub H17 2. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A method of preparing and transporting food for rethermalization comprising the steps of:

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- at a first location:
 - preparing food;
 - apportioning the prepared food onto at least one tray;
 - loading the at least one tray, bearing the apportioned food, onto a rack for receiving and supporting a plurality of trays in a predetermined alignment;
 - providing a refrigerated transfer vehicle for transporting the rack, loaded with the at least one tray bearing the apportioned food, from the first location to a second location spaced from the first location;

loading the rack, stacked with the at least one tray, onto a refrigerated transfer vehicle for transportation to a second location;

transporting the rack, containing the at least one tray bearing the apportioned food, in the transfer vehicle to the second location;

at the second location:

transferring the rack from the transfer vehicle to a moveable receptacle at the second location; and

rethermalizing the apportioned food while the at least one tray is supported by the rack at the second location.

3. (ORIGINAL) The method as claimed in claim 2, further comprising the step of, following sufficient regeneration of the apportioned food at the second location, distributing the at least one tray bearing the apportioned food to a consumer for consumption.

4. (ORIGINAL) The method as claimed in claim 3, further comprising the step of utilizing the rack to recover the at least one tray from the consumer, following consumption of a desired portion of the apportioned food by the consumer.

5. (ORIGINAL) The method as claimed in claim 4, further comprising the step of, following recovery of the at least one tray from the consumer, transporting the recovered at least one tray back to the first location via use of the rack.

6-8. (CANCELED)

9. (AMENDED) The method as claimed in claim 2, further comprising the step of using a mobile trolley incorporating heating/cooling means as the receptacle to facilitate rethermalization of the apportioned food on the at least one tray.

10. (AMENDED) The method as claimed in claim 2, further comprising the step of using one of:

a mobile trolley incorporating heating/cooling means as the receptacle;

the mobile trolley coupled in operable combination with a separate heating cooling means; and

the heating/cooling means to facilitate rethermalization of the apportioned food on the at least one tray.

11. (NEW) The method as claimed in claim 2, further comprising the step of loading a plurality of trays, each bearing apportioned food, onto the rack prior to

H₁ transporting the rack, loaded with the plurality of trays bearing the apportioned food, to the second location by way of a transport vehicle.

12. (AMENDED) The method as claimed in claim 2, further comprising the step of placing the transported rack, loaded with the at least one tray bearing the apportioned food, in storage prior to rethermalizing the apportioned food of the at least one tray.

13. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A method of preparing, transporting and dispensing food, the method comprising the steps of:

at a first location:

preparing the food for consumption;

apportioning the food onto a plurality of trays at the first location;

providing a manually maneuverable rack with a predetermined stacking arrangement of particular dimensions and stacking the plurality of trays, once apportioned with food, in the rack;

loading the rack, stacked with the plurality of trays, onto a refrigerated transport vehicle for transportation to a second remote location;

transporting the rack, containing the at least one tray bearing the apportioned food, in the transport vehicle to the remote location;

at the second remote location:

transferring the rack, at the second location, from the transport vehicle to a moveable receptacle, and the receptacle having at least one of heating means and cooling means, and the receptacle being configured to receive at least one rack;

activating one of the heating means and the cooling means to rethermalize the apportioned food of the plurality of trays of the rack; and

dispensing the plurality of trays, containing the apportioned food, to consumers for consumption once the apportioned food is sufficiently rethermalized.

14. (CANCELED)

15. (PREVIOUSLY AMENDED) The method as claimed in claim 13, further comprising the steps of:

using the rack to collect the plurality of trays following consumption of the apportioned food by the consumers; and

returning the plurality of trays and the rack via the transport vehicle back to the first location for reuse and wherein the receptacle remains at the second location.

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 16. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The method as claimed in claim 13, wherein the receptacle is a mobile receptacle and the method further comprising the step of using the mobile moveable receptacle to dispense the plurality of trays, containing the apportioned food to consumers for consumption with the rack contained within the mobile moveable receptacle during dispensing of the plurality of trays.

17. (PREVIOUSLY AMENDED) The method as claimed in claim 16, further comprising the step of, following consumption of the apportioned food by the consumers, collecting the plurality of trays with the rack located within the mobile receptacle.

18. (ORIGINAL) The method as claimed in claim 17, further comprising the steps of:

removing the rack from the mobile receptacle following collection of the plurality of trays; and

returning the plurality of trays and the rack back to the first location for reuse while leaving the receptacle at the second location.

19. (PREVIOUSLY AMENDED) The method as claimed in claim 13, further comprising the step of placing the transported rack, loaded with the plurality of trays bearing the apportioned food, in storage prior to rethermalizing the apportioned food of the plurality of trays.

20. (PREVIOUSLY AMENDED) The method as claimed in claim 13, further comprising the steps of

collecting the plurality of trays with the rack in the receptacle following consumption by the consumer; and

returning the plurality of trays and the rack back to the first location for reuse while leaving the receptacle at the second location.

21. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A method of preparing, transporting and dispensing food, the method comprising the steps of:

at a first location:

preparing food for consumption;

apportioning the food onto a plurality of trays at the first location;

providing a manually maneuverable rack and stacking the plurality of trays, once apportioned with food, in the rack;

loading the rack, stacked with the plurality of trays, onto a refrigerated transport vehicle for transportation to a second remote location;

transporting the rack, containing the ~~at least one tray~~ plurality of trays bearing the apportioned food, in the transport vehicle to the remote location;

at the second remote location:

transferring the rack, at the second location, from the refrigerated transport vehicle to a moveable receptacle, and the moveable receptacle having at least one of heating means and cooling means, and the receptacle being configured to receive at least one rack;

activating one of the heating means and the cooling means to regenerate the apportioned food of the plurality of trays of the rack while contained within the moveable receptacle; and

dispensing the plurality of trays, containing the apportioned food, from the moveable receptacle to consumers for consumption once the apportioned food is sufficiently regenerated;

collecting the plurality of trays with the rack in the receptacle following consumption by the consumer;

removing the at least one manually maneuverable rack from the moveable receptacle;

loading the at least one manually maneuverable rack back onto the transfer vehicle for transportation of the rack from the second location back to the first location for reuse while leaving the receptacle at the second location.

22. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A method of preparing, transporting and dispensing food between a series of remote locations, the method comprising the steps of:

at a first location:

preparing the food for consumption at a first location;
apportioning the food onto a plurality of trays at the first location;
stacking the trays in a manually maneuverable rack, and providing the rack with a predetermined stacking arrangement of particular dimensions;

loading the maneuverable rack onto a refrigerated transfer vehicle for transportation to a second remote location;

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transporting the rack, containing the at least one tray bearing the apportioned food, in the transport vehicle to the remote location;

at the second remote location:

transferring the maneuverable rack, at the second location, into a moveable receptacle comprising at least one of heating and cooling means, and the receptacle being configured to receive at least one of the plurality of racks;

relocating the moveable receptacle to a desired position;

activating at least one of the heating and cooling means prior to dispensing of the food trays to consumers;

dispensing the food trays to the consumers for consumption;

collecting and re-stacking the trays in the rack situated within the receptacle;

removing the at least one maneuverable rack from the moveable receptacle; and

loading the at least one maneuverable rack back onto the transfer vehicle for transportation of the rack from the second location back to the first location.

23. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A method of preparing and transporting food for rethermalization comprising the steps of:

apportioning food onto at least one tray;

at a first location:

loading at least one tray bearing the apportioned food onto a manually maneuverable rack for receiving and supporting the at least one tray and providing the rack with a predetermined stacking arrangement of particular dimensions;

loading the rack, containing the at least one tray, onto a refrigerated transport vehicle for transportation to a remote location from the first location;

transporting the rack, containing the at least one tray bearing the apportioned food, in the transport vehicle to the remote location;

at the remote location:

after the rack has been transported to the remote location in the transport vehicle, transferring the rack from the transport vehicle to a moveable receptacle, the receptacle being configured to receive at least one rack; and

activating a heating system and a cooling system to regenerate the apportioned food on the at least one tray on the rack that is positioned in the receptacle.

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24. (PREVIOUSLY ADDED) The method as claimed in claim 23, the heating system and the cooling system being located in the receptacle.

25. (PREVIOUSLY ADDED) The method as claimed in claim 23, the heating system and the cooling system being demountably coupled to the receptacle.

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26. (PREVIOUSLY ADDED) The method as claimed in claim 23, further comprising the step of:
dispensing the at least one tray bearing the apportioned food to a consumer for consumption of the food.

27. (PREVIOUSLY ADDED) The method as claimed in claim 26, further comprising the step of:

collecting the at least one tray after the at least one tray has been dispensed to a consumer for consumption of the food.

28. (PREVIOUSLY ADDED) The method as claimed in claim 27, further comprising the step of:

returning the at least one tray and the rack to the first location.

29. (PREVIOUSLY ADDED) The method as claimed in claim 23, the transfer vehicle being a refrigerated vehicle.

30. (PREVIOUSLY ADDED) The method as claimed in claim 23, further comprising the step of:
dispensing the at least one tray bearing the apportioned food to a consumer for consumption of the food;

the transfer vehicle being a refrigerated vehicle; and

the heating system and the cooling system being located in the receptacle.

31. (PREVIOUSLY ADDED) The method as claimed in claim 23, further comprising the step of:
dispensing the at least one tray bearing the apportioned food to a consumer for consumption of the food;

the transfer vehicle being a refrigerated vehicle; and

the heating system and the cooling system being demountably coupled to the receptacle.

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32. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A method of preparing and transporting food for rethermalization comprising the steps of:

apportioning food onto at least one tray;

at a first location:

loading at least one tray bearing the apportioned food onto a manually maneuverable rack for receiving and supporting the at least one tray;

loading the rack, containing the at least one tray, onto a refrigerated transport vehicle for transportation to a remote location from the first location;

transporting the rack, containing the at least one tray bearing the apportioned food, in the transport vehicle to the remote location;

at the remote location:

after the rack has been transported to the remote location in the transport vehicle, transferring the rack from the transport vehicle to a moveable receptacle, the receptacle being configured to receive at least one rack;

providing a heating system and a cooling system to regenerate the apportioned food on the at least one tray on the rack in the receptacle; and

activating at least one of the heating system and the cooling system to regenerate the apportioned food on the at least one tray on the rack that is positioned in the receptacle.

33. (PREVIOUSLY ADDED) The method as claimed in claim 32, the heating system and the cooling system being located in the receptacle.

34. (PREVIOUSLY ADDED) The method as claimed in claim 32, the heating system and the cooling system being demountably coupled to the receptacle.

35. (PREVIOUSLY ADDED) The method as claimed in claim 32, further comprising the step of:
dispensing the at least one tray bearing the apportioned food to a consumer for consumption of the food.

36. (PREVIOUSLY ADDED) The method as claimed in claim 35, further comprising the step of:
collecting the at least one tray after the at least one tray has been dispensed to a consumer for consumption of the food.

37. (PREVIOUSLY ADDED) The method as claimed in claim 36, further comprising the step of:

returning the at least one tray and the rack to the first location.

38. (PREVIOUSLY ADDED) The method as claimed in claim 32, the transfer vehicle being a refrigerated vehicle.

39. (PREVIOUSLY ADDED) The method as claimed in claim 32, further comprising the step of:

dispensing the at least one tray bearing the apportioned food to a consumer for consumption of the food;

the transfer vehicle being a refrigerated vehicle; and

the heating system and the cooling system being located in the receptacle.

40. (PREVIOUSLY ADDED) The method as claimed in claim 32, further comprising the step of:

dispensing the at least one tray bearing the apportioned food to a consumer for consumption of the food;

the transfer vehicle being a refrigerated vehicle; and

the heating system and the cooling system being demountably coupled to the receptacle.

41. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A method of preparing, transporting and dispensing food, the method comprising the steps of:

preparing the food for consumption at a first location;

apportioning the food onto a plurality of trays at the first location;

providing a manually maneuverable rack, lacking any heating and cooling means, with a predetermined stacking arrangement of particular dimensions, and stacking the plurality of trays, once apportioned with food, in the rack;

loading the rack, stacked with the plurality of trays, onto a refrigerated transport vehicle for transportation to a second remote location;

transferring the rack, at the second location, from the refrigerated transport vehicle to a moveable receptacle, and the moveable receptacle having a heating means and a cooling means, and the receptacle being configured to receive at least one rack;

relocating the moveable receptacle to a desired position;

activating the heating means and the cooling means to rethermalize the apportioned food of the plurality of trays of the rack; and

dispensing the plurality of trays, containing the apportioned food, to consumers for consumption once the apportioned food is sufficiently rethermalized.

42- 46. (CANCELED)

47. (~~PREVIOUSLY ADDED~~**CURRENTLY AMENDED**) A method of preparing, ♦♦
 transporting and dispensing food, the method comprising the steps of:

at a first location:

preparing food for consumption;

apportioning the food onto a plurality of trays;

providing a manually maneuverable rack and stacking the plurality of ♦♦
 trays, once apportioned with food, in the rack;

loading the rack, stacked with the plurality of trays, onto a refrigerated ♦♦
 transport vehicle for transportation from the first location to a remote intermediate ♦♦
 location;

transporting the rack, stacked with the plurality of trays bearing the
 apportioned food, in the transport vehicle to the intermediate location;

at the intermediate location:

transferring the rack, stacked with the plurality of trays bearing the
 apportioned food, from the transport vehicle to a separate moveable receptacle, and ♦♦
 the receptacle being configured to receive the rack, stacked with the plurality of trays
 bearing the apportioned food, and having a regeneration device for controlling a
 temperature of the apportioned food

activating the regeneration device to commence regeneration of the
 apportioned food of the plurality of trays on the rack;

transporting the receptacle with the rack, stacked with the plurality of trays
 bearing the apportioned food, to a second location; and

dispensing the plurality of trays bearing the apportioned food from the
 receptacle to consumers for consumption once the apportioned food is sufficiently
 regenerated.

48. (~~PREVIOUSLY ADDED~~**CURRENTLY AMENDED**) The method according ♦♦
 to claim 247, further comprising the steps of: ♦♦

following consumption by the consumers, collecting the plurality of trays
 and placing the plurality of trays in the rack received by the receptacle;

returning from the receptacle back to the intermediate location;

removing the rack, with the collected plurality of trays, from the receptacle
 and loading the rack onto the transfer vehicle for transportation of the rack, with the

collected plurality of trays, from the intermediate location back to the first location for reuse while the moveable receptacle remaining at the intermediate location for reuse.

49. (~~PREVIOUSLY ADDED~~ **CURRENTLY AMENDED**) A method of preparing, transporting and dispensing food, the method comprising the steps of:

at a first location:

preparing food for consumption;

apportioning the food onto a plurality of trays;

providing a manually maneuverable rack and stacking the plurality of trays, once apportioned with food, in the rack;

loading the rack, stacked with the plurality of trays, onto a refrigerated transport vehicle for transportation from the first location to a remote intermediate location;

transporting the rack, stacked with the plurality of trays bearing the apportioned food, in the refrigerated transport vehicle to the intermediate location;

at the intermediate location:

transferring the rack, stacked with the plurality of trays bearing the apportioned food, from the refrigerated transport vehicle to a moveable receptacle, and the moveable receptacle being configured to receive the rack, stacked with the plurality of trays bearing the apportioned food, and having at least one of heating means and cooling means;

activating one of the heating means and the cooling means to commence regeneration of the apportioned food of the plurality of trays on the rack;

transporting the moveable receptacle with the rack, stacked with the plurality of trays bearing the apportioned food, to a second location;

dispensing the plurality of trays bearing the apportioned food from the receptacle to consumers for consumption once the apportioned food is sufficiently regenerated;

following consumption by the consumers, collecting the plurality of trays and placing the plurality of trays in the rack received by the moveable receptacle;

returning from the moveable receptacle back to the intermediate location;

removing the rack, with the collected plurality of trays, from the moveable receptacle and loading the rack onto the transfer vehicle for transportation of the rack, with the collected plurality of trays, from the intermediate location back to the first